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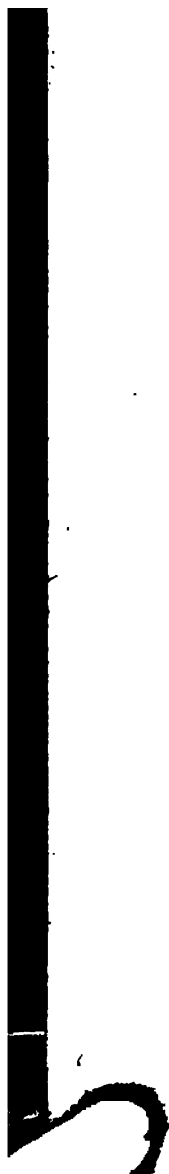
THE HAUNTED HOUSE

TRANSLATED FROM

PLAUTUS



H. A. STRONG





THE HAUNTED HOUSE.





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TRANSLATED FROM PLAUTUS

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"At nostri proavi Plautinos et numeros, et
Laudavere sales."—HORACE.



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PREFACE.



MY object in publishing a metrical translation of the *Mostellaria* has been an attempt to bring the spirit and humour of Plautus more vividly before those who may study him than can be done in a merely bald and literal translation. I much fear that the beginner may find my version not so close to the original as he could wish ; while the more advanced scholar may regret the absence of critical notes. I felt, however, that in a translation, which I hope may prove interesting to English readers, such would be out of place. I have contented myself, therefore, with a few prefatory remarks, which I hope may enable the non-classical reader to picture to himself, to a certain

extent, the way in which a Roman comedy was put upon the stage. For the information contained in those remarks, I am indebted mainly to Lorenz's most useful edition of the "Mossellaria" in the Haupt and Sauppe classics, to Mr. Wright's "History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art," and to Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature." I have found great use from the late Professor Ramsay's edition (London, 1869) of the same play, and would express my warmest gratitude to the present Professor Ramsay and also to Professor Nichol for the assistance they have given me in cases in which I was in doubt.

I would merely add that should this translation prove useful to students, or interesting to English readers, I hope to follow it with a similar version of the "Captivi," and the "Miles Gloriosus."

Glasgow University,
August, 1871.



INTRODUCTION.



THE word "Mostellaria" is an adjectival diminutive, derived from the word *mostellum*, itself the diminutive of *monstrum*. The meaning of the title, therefore, is "Mostellaria fabula," "the play of the ghost house." Like the rest of Roman comedies, it is a translation from a Greek original, though what that original may have been remains a subject of doubt. In all probability, however, we may suppose it to have been a piece called the "Phantasma," or "Phantom" of Philemon, one of the most celebrated Greek writers of the new comedy. It will be noticed

that most of the proper names in the piece have direct reference to the character or profession of the bearers of them, just as they have in the plays of our own comedians of the last century. The scene should have been a street, with a view of the town behind ; in front, the house of Theopropides on one side, and that of Simo on the other; a small garden in front of each, where the drinking-scene would have taken place, and Simo have spoken his monologue. In Plautus' days, however, the scenery must have been infinitely less perfect than we moderns, especially in Britain, are accustomed to expect, and we must remember that the ancient actors made up for this want by explaining to the audience whither their interlocutor was gone, or whence he came. The probability is that the wall on the back of the scene represented the houses of Theopropides and Simo ; the stage itself was broader and not so deep as our modern ones ; the side walls will have been furnished with two opposite doors—

the one, conventionally known as leading to the "Piræus," the other to the town of Athens. An altar stood before the house upon the stage, dedicated to the god Apollo, just as it stood before the real houses in Athens. The curtain was not drawn up as with us, but by means of some machinery, with which we are unacquainted, was drawn down at the opening of the play and drawn up at its conclusion. It seems that fantastic figures were embroidered on this "aulæum" who seemed to rise from the ground and to pull up the curtain with them. There was, however, another kind of scenery (*scena ductilis*) which must have consisted of shifting boards. The actors in the Roman theatres were provided with masks, at least from the time of Terence. In Plautus' time, they must have been well acquainted with their use, for the Greeks had already brought them to a high degree of perfection. They served mainly to collect and reverberate the voice, something like a speaking-

trumpet, and their very name is said by an ancient writer to have reference to this circumstance (*persona a personando*—Aul. Gell. v. 7). At the same time, however, they will have served to make the actor stand out more prominently before the audience, a point of some importance, as the Roman theatres were capable of accommodating far larger audiences than our own. That in Pompeii, for instance, would have contained, it is calculated, not less than five thousand. It is also probable that, as the main characters represented on the ancient stage were constantly recurring, masks and dresses of a particular shape and colour served to denote particular personages. We know, for instance, that in Grecian tragedy, Priam was always shaven; Ulysses was dressed in a cloak, that being the Ithacan habit; Achilles and Neoptolemus were introduced with diadems. To render the actor tall enough to support the mask, boots with thick soles were invented, from which the word

"buskin" has become almost convertible with "tragedy" in English. The comic shoe was called "soccus." The ordinary dress of the men on the stage was a sleeveless tunic, white, and without stripes ; the *ιματίον*, which was worn over it, was probably also white when worn by old men, purple when by younger ones. The slaves wore over their tunics a short cloak : the parasites were dressed in grey or black, and made to look as ridiculous as possible. Peasants bore a staff in their hand, and wore a rough coat. Priestesses and girls were robed in white, older women in yellow or blue. The above sketch may serve to give some idea of the appearance of the actors in this play.

The Romans prided themselves especially upon the national "gravitas" or dignity of character ; but blended with this appears to have been a strong sense of humour. Mr. Wright, in his admirable "History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art," cites

some remarkable instances of their love of caricature, a trait which has developed itself so strongly in their French successors. He gives an example of one of the wall paintings at Pompeii, which is a parody on one of the favourite national legends of the Roman people, who prided themselves on their descent from Æneas. Virgil has told the miraculous story of his hero's escape from the destruction of Troy. Seeing the city in flames, Æneas took his father Anchises on his shoulder and his boy Iulus by the hand, and thus fled from home, followed by his wife :—

“ Then seat thyself upon my neck, my sire,
These shoulders shall support thy lovèd weight ;—
However fortune falls, be one our risk,
Be one our safety. I will lead
Iulus by the hand, my tiny boy,
My wife shall follow in my steps behind.”

Virg. *Æn.* lib. ii. l. 707.

“ Thus,” to quote Mr. Wright, “ they hurried on, the child holding by the father's right hand, and dragging after with unequal steps.”—

“Dextræ se parvus Iūlus
Implicuit, sequiturque patrem non passibus æquis.”

l. 723.

And thus Æneas bore away both father and son, and the penates, or household gods of his family, which were to be transferred to another country, and become the future guardians of Rome :—

“Ascanium, Anchisenque patrem Teucrosque penates.”

l. 747.

In this case we know that the design is intended to be a parody or burlesque upon a picture, which appears to have been celebrated at the time, and of which, at least, two different copies are found upon ancient intaglios. In the parody the same figures are represented as monkeys—the same dog-headed animals or cynocephali which are found on the Egyptian monuments.

We do not intend to go into the history of the Roman drama here ; but would merely remark

that while the bulk of Roman tragedy and comedy alike was taken from the Greek, yet that there was a certain class of actors who were purely Roman in their origin, and who, down to the latest days of the Roman empire, retained their hold upon the affections of the Roman people. Such was the "Sannio" or buffoon, the origin of our modern "Zany," whose name was derived from the Greek word *σάννος*, a fool (our sawney), and who answered to the fool kept in the dark ages of England by the wealthy, excepting that he exhibited his tricks to the Roman public for pay. An engraving, representing a "Sannio," is given by Mr. Wright, copied from an engraving in the "*Dissertatio de Larvis Scenicis*," by the Italian antiquary, Ficoroni, who took it from an engraved gem. He is represented with an enormous mouth, which gives to the mask a highly ludicrous expression, and with a brass rod in his hand, answering to the magic wand of harlequin in modern times. The Italians of modern times

have inherited from their Roman ancestors a strong turn for ludicrous improvisation, and it is to the Mimes and Atellane Fables, as Schlegel has remarked, that we must look for the origin of the "*Commedia dell' Arte*," the improvisatory farce with standing masks. Thus Harlequin and Puncinello can point to an ancient, if not a noble lineage. Another popular buffoon among the Romans was the "*mimus*," or "*merry-andrew*," whose strong point was the mimicry of peculiar characteristics of individuals. That the ruling passion was strong in death may be shown by the fact that in the funeral of wealthy Romans such "*mimi*" were employed to imitate the gestures of the defunct, as they walked in his funeral procession.

The "*Mostellaria*" has formed the model of several modern plays, and given hints to others. Ludwig Holberg, a Danish writer of comedies of the last century, in his "*Abracadabra*" has closely imitated Plautus, omitting, however,

Philolaches' first soliloquy, and the female characters in the play. On the other hand, he has seen how it was possible, to make more of some of the comic situations in the play than Plautus has done. For instance, in the first act he makes his Heinrich (who answers to Tranio) sound Jeronimus (Theopropides) to see how credulous he is, ere venturing to impose upon him. Jeronimus, at the first mention of the ghost story, expresses a strong doubt as to its truth; on which Heinrich remarks that it is probable that his master's long sojourn abroad has shaken his faith; he has always heard that such was one of the sad effects of foreign travel. "No, certainly not," replies Jeronimus, "I'm as orthodox as ever I was in my life." "Do you then believe in ghosts, sprites, and demons?" "Most undoubtedly! No honest man shall ever be able to say of me that I have departed a foot's breadth from my old faith." This gradual sounding of Jeronimus' capacities for belief

makes the amount which he is afterwards represented as taking in seem less unnatural.


In the scene of the purchasing of Leonard's (Simo's) house, Holberg has equally improved and enlarged upon his original. I translate the following amusing dialogue from Lorenz' excellent extract. Heinrich—"Look ye, Master, at this floor, is it not charming?" "It is, capital." "Remark specially the doors!" "They are lovely." "Could you get a lock anywhere to match this in security?" Leonard—"Well, I promise you, I wouldn't sell one of my locks under ten dollars." Jeronimus (under his breath to Heinrich)—"What does he mean by that?" Heinrich (softly), "Quiet! you know how vexed he is about his sale; according to the contract, all that is nailed fast belongs to us." Jeronimus—"The stoves, I imagine, go with the house, Herr Leonard?" L. (gently to Heinrich)—"What does he mean by that?" Heinrich—"Oh! I'll tell you; in Lübeck, where my Master

was detained so long by a lawsuit, the house-stoves were always let separately from the house." L.—"I see; it's a Lübeck way of talking, then!" Jeronimus—"The rafters are all of oak?" Leonard—"They are; and I advise you to employ no other kind of wood for your house." Jeronimus, to Heinrich—"I don't understand what he means by that at all." H. (softly)—"Poor fellow; he can't get rid of his rage at the absurdly small price he got for his sale; directly the conversation turns on this point he begins to maunder." Jeronimus—"How soon do you think, Herr Leonard, of moving from these apartments?" Leonard (to Heinrich)—"What does this mean again? I suppose this is another of your Lübeck expressions?" Heinrich (softly)—"It is. He means how early are you accustomed to move into your summer quarters?" Leonard—"Ah, now I understand; sometimes, we move before Easter, sometimes after." Jeronimus to Hein-

rich—"He's maundering again." Heinrich (softly to him)—"You see it's as I told you. See, he's taking a good pinch of snuff to clear his head!" The French copies of the "*Mostellaria*" are, as might be imagined, from a plot which gives so much scope for false situations and brilliant repartees, numerous. The chief ones cited by Lorenz, are "*Les Esprits*," by Pierre la Rive, (1550-1600), "*Le comédien poète*," by Montfleury (1640-1683), "*Le trésor caché*," by Des-touches (1680-1754), "*Le retour imprévu*," by Jean François Regnard (1565-1709).—In the English drama, it is possible that Addison, in his "*Drummer*" may have been indebted to the "*Mostellaria*" for the use he makes of an imaginary haunted house. In that play, one Sir George Truman is introduced who is reputed to have lost his life in the Netherlands, leaving his supposed widow, Lady Truman, in possession of a handsome fortune at home. Penelope-like, she is besieged by suitors, but remains

constant. One of these, more crafty than the rest, hits on the device of bribing Mrs. Abigail, Lady Truman's maid, to allow him entry into the house, for which he secures the reputation of being haunted, by causing a drum to be constantly beaten in it at unearthly hours. He succeeds in scaring away all the other suitors, save one Mr. Tinsel, an avowed freethinker and scorner of everything supernatural. Sir George comes home, and, under the character of a conjurer, obtains admission into his own house, whence he easily succeeds in scaring the Drummer and Mr. Tinsel alike.

"The Intriguing Chambermaid" of Fielding, a comedy in two acts, acted at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1733, is a more direct imitation of the "*Mostellaria*" than the "*Drummer*." In this play the counterpart of Tranio is one Mrs. Lettice, that of Philolaches Valentine Goodall, while the Simo of the play is an old lady called Mrs. Highman, with whose niece Charlotte



Valentine is in love. The aunt, however, is bent upon marrying her niece to one Mr. Oldcastle, a gentleman who has nothing to recommend him as a husband but the certainty that he cannot be spared to trouble any one long. This introduction of the love affairs of the hero and heroine of the piece serves to render the play more suitable to the modern requirements of a smaller stage which demands a more complex plot, and at the same time is characteristic of the far greater part which honourable courtship plays in modern time than in ancient. The *Danista* is represented by Fielding by two characters,—Trick, a money-lender, and Slap, an attorney's clerk, the latter of whom appears with a writ under which he is commissioned to arrest Valentine, who, like *Philolaches*, is carousing in the house of his father with a party of merry friends, including *Charlotte*. The "*Cantica*" in the "*Mostellaria*" are replaced by some graceful lyric couplets, breathing much of the spirit of

Catullus and Herrick. Such is the stanza sung by Valentine to Charlotte on the occasion of the feast, and that in which she replies to him :—


“ Come, Charlotte, let’s be gay,
Let’s enjoy ourselves to-day,
To-morrow’s in the hands of the powers,
To-day alone is ours.
Let fools for wealth spend time and health,
While we more happy try
In each soft kiss transporting bliss,
Which treasures ne’er can buy.

Charlotte. Let age grave lessons preach
’Gainst what she cannot reach ;
Let prudes condemn what we esteem,
All fools our joys impeach.”

In the midst of the dance which follows the banquet given by Valentine, Mrs. Lettice announces the arrival of Mr. Goodall from India, where he had been absent on a trading voyage. Having spread consternation among the guests by this announcement, she retires, and delays the merchant’s entering by a conversation in

which she seeks to persuade him that his son has made the most profitable use of his time since his father's absence by putting out his money at high interest. Meantime a third usurer, one Security, comes up, and threatens to sue out an execution for a thousand pounds should Valentine not pay him at once. Mr. Goodall's astonishment is calmed by Mrs. Lettice assuring him that Valentine had bought a house at the price of two thousand pounds, "which every one says is worth more than four," and this he could not have done without borrowing this thousand pounds. Mr. Goodall dismisses the usurer with promise to pay the money on the next day, and begs to know where the house is situated. To this embarrassing question Mrs. Lettice replies by indicating the house of Mrs. Highman, Charlotte's aunt. As in the case of Tranio, one lie leads on to another, and Mr. Goodall is speedily informed that the old lady is out of her senses, and that her family have taken

out a commission of lunacy against her; and also that a son of hers, a most abandoned prodigal, had suddenly made his appearance and sold all she had for half its value. Before visiting his son's new house, Mr. Goodall expresses his intention of looking in upon his son. Mrs. Lettice rejoins that the house is haunted, and that Valentine has long since left it. "Hath been haunted, sir, with the most terrible apparitions that were ever heard or beheld! You'd think the devil himself had taken possession of it! Nay, I believe he hath, too,—all the wild noises in the universe,—the squeaking of pigs, the grinding of knives, the whetting of saws, the whistling of winds, the roaring of seas, the hooting of owls, the howling of wolves, the braying of asses, the squalling of children, and the scolding of wives, all put together, make not so hideous a concert. This I myself have heard: nay, and I have seen such sights! One with about twenty heads, and a hundred eyes and



mouths and noses in each." By giving yet further details of this picture she works upon Mr. Goodall's credulity, who says that he will go and visit his son's newly-purchased house instead. Lettice beseeches him to remember Mrs. Highman's infirmity, and he promises to humour it. Meantime, Lettice perceives Mrs. Highman herself hastening to join them. In a moment she is by her side, and has whispered into her ear that the merchant's voyage has been a failure, and that his losses incurred on the voyage have turned his brain. She adds that he is shortly to be shut up in a madhouse. Mrs. Highman and Mr. Goodall, after exchanging compliments, fall to questioning each other as to their respective lunacy, and finally part in anger. Fielding has not made as much of this scene as he might have done. One of the most amusing scenes in the "*Mostellaria*" is the complication which arises from Simo humouring what he fancies to be Theopropides' whim of taking his house as

a model for one he intends to build, while Theopropides in his turn fancies that he is humouring one, who, having in fact parted from his house, likes to be spoken to as if he were still the rightful owner. The main features of this scene it would have been easy to reproduce. Mr. Slap next comes upon the scene with a warrant, and knocks at Valentine's door. The guests naturally object, and meantime Mr. Goodall comes up and insists upon admission as well. He gains his point, rebukes the thankless guests, and dismisses them first, and finally Charlotte and Valentine, who quit the house with strong protestations of their unchangeable love. Mr. Goodall and Mrs. Highman, who now comes up, are induced to relent, and to settle a handsome fortune upon Valentine and Charlotte respectively.

The plot of the "Mostellaria" is as follows : Theopropides, a rich merchant of Athens, has gone on a voyage to Egypt, where he has been

three whole years. During his absence his son Philolaches, once a young man of high principle and honour, has fallen into evil habits, and wasted his father's fortune. For this he has partly to thank his passion for Philematium, a freedwoman of his own, partly the extravagance of Tranio, a clever but unprincipled slave, whom his master left in charge of him during his own absence. The play opens with a violent interchange of abuse between Grumio, an honest slave of Theopropides, and Tranio : the former reproaches the latter for his reckless conduct, and the latter characteristically jeers at him for his moral counsel and sets him at defiance. In the next Scene (ii.) we see Philolaches alone, and are admitted to view the mental struggle of the young man, whose better self is not yet so deadened as not to make its still small voice heard now and then. In really poetical language he contrasts mournfully what he was once and what he is now, likening himself to a house

which the owner has neglected to keep in repair, and which consequently is falling to decay. In the third Scene, Philematium, Philolaches' mistress, comes in, followed by her maid Scapha. Soon as Philolaches sees his love, who has decked herself out to look her best for his pleasure, he forgets all his trouble and pain: his passion for Philematium expresses itself in the warmest and most enthusiastic manner; and Philematium's fidelity and single-minded love form a pleasant contrast to the avaricious Scapha's advice that she should not confine her love to one alone. They sit down to play at dice, when in comes Philolaches' boon companion, Callidamates, ever merry and ever ready for a carouse. His mistress Delphium conducts him, as copious draughts have rendered him hardly *compos sui*. The attempts at conversation of the half-sober Callidamates are very amusing. Philolaches brings him to the banqueting couch, where he speedily falls asleep.

In Scene v. Tranio, who had left his fellow-slave to go to the harbour to buy some fish for supper, comes running back with the startling news that Theopropides has unexpectedly returned from Egypt, and may be looked for at any moment! The whole company, Tranio excepted, are electrified by the announcement. He, however, keeps his presence of mind perfectly, and at once perceives that the first object to aim at, is to prevent the old man from entering the house at all, and witnessing the signs of costly revelry there displayed. He at once transfers the banqueters from the garden to the interior of the house, meeting, however, with some difficulty in the case of Callidamates, who has to be awakened and enlightened as to the peril of the situation. Finally, however, the desired object is accomplished; the guests remove inside; and Tranio stands sentry without. He speaks confidently of a device which shall not merely prevent the old man from entering

the house, but even cause him to turn and flee before he have reached the door.

In Scene vi. Theopropides arrives, delighted at having escaped the perils of the sea, and looking forward to the hearty welcome which he will receive from his friends at home. To his astonishment he finds the house closed, and to all appearance deserted. Tranio now comes up as if by accident, greets his old master, congratulates him on his arrival, and enquires anxiously if he has touched the door? On Theopropides answering in the affirmative, he expresses his horror, drags his master away from his dangerous position, half begs, half commands him to follow his own example, falling down and touching the earth to appease the hideous powers of the lower world, whom he has mortally offended. At last he seemingly recovers self-possession enough to be able to gasp out to his master an impromptu ghost-story, setting forth that a guest had in olden

times been murdered by his master, and the burial-rites denied to the corpse, which now, with many others, ran riot in the deserted house. Theopropides falls into an agony of terror, but still is within an ace of discovering the trick played upon him ; for Philolaches, in his anxiety, knocks at the door from the inside, and calls on Tranio. The latter, with wondrous presence of mind, turns the untoward circumstance to good account, by declaring that the offended ghost's indignation was aroused, and that it was coming forth to summon both the offenders from below. Theopropides can no longer bear the thought of his imprudence, covers his head, and runs away, invoking Hercules.


Scene vii. A new enemy comes upon the scene, viz., the Usurer, from whom Philolaches has borrowed forty minæ, and who now comes to claim his own with interest. Tranio prepares to accost him, but to his great embarrassment, perceives

Theopropides returning, who declares that he has met the last possessor of the house, and that from him he has learnt that the whole story of Tranio's is a fabrication. Tranio is now in a pretty plight, and no one is more aware of the fact than he himself. However, he plucks up courage to exhort his master to bring the former owner of the house to justice ; and then, seeing himself remarked by the Usurer, goes to meet him. He takes the bull by the horns, and accosts his enemy, who, however, is not to be put off by words ; but vows with Shylockian energy, that he will have his money to the last farthing. He cries so loud for his rights, that Theopropides, suspecting something wrong, calls his slave back. Tranio extricates himself from his new embarrassment by a new lie ; Philolaches, it is true, has borrowed money, he owns, but it is all in the way of business ; he found a house which he could have at a decided bargain, borrowed the money to pay for it, and

the result was a fair prospect of making his fortune. "Good," said Theopropides; "he's a chip of the old block! a business man like myself. I'll pay his debts, and go and see the house at once." Tranio once again in embarrassment, once again helps himself out by a lie. "There are ladies in the house," says he; "let me go first and ask them if they object." Tranio quits his master, cursing his impatience, and at the same moment, out comes Simo from his own house. Simo is a testy old man, who has married a shrew for her money, and who now finds his bargain a little dear. Tranio informs him of the unexpected arrival of Theopropides, and adds, that he had resolved upon marrying his son without delay; a punishment not unusual with Athenian fathers who wished to put a stop to the evil courses of their profligate sons. The slave further begs that Theopropides may inspect Simo's house, with a view of building part of a new one for his son on its design. Simo,

not without surprise and a little suspicion, gives his assent, and master and slave at once cross over to Simo's, with the view of availing themselves of the permission. The dialogue that ensues is one of the most amusing in the play; the cross-questions and crooked answers which Tranio manages to explain, so as to avoid either Simo or Theopropides discovering his trick, form a real comedy of errors. Simo says he must go away to the market, and leaves Theopropides to inspect the interior of the house.

In the beginning of Act III., we see a forecast of the solution of the false position of the various characters. Callidamates' attendants come at mid-day, according to his orders, to fetch him home after the "prandium," or "déjeuner à la fourchette," which the Romans took about mid-day. The ninth and tenth scenes are taken up with an argument between Phaniscus, a model slave, and another "advorsitor," or attendant. They knock at the door, and finding it closed,



resolve to wait a while. Meantime out comes Theopropides from Simo's house, triumphant over his new bargain. He is anxious to pay the rest of the money without delay, to prevent the contract by any possibility being declared null and void. Tranio declares that he will go and fetch Philolaches, who is in the country, but in reality sneaks round to the garden behind the house, to remove, if possible, the would-be banqueters from the house by that way. Theopropides, catching sight of the attendants of Callidamates, hurries to them, and enters into conversation with Phaniscus. From him he discovers that anything but a ghostly silence has reigned in his house since his absence; on the contrary, it has been one scene of wild revelry and mirth from morning to night. Poor Theopropides discovers then to his consternation, that he has indeed been ruined, and that by his own son. He makes off to Simo, to obtain from him fuller information about the fact. Simo returns

at this moment from the market. In Scene xii. Simo confirms Theopropides' suspicions, and both go into the house of the former to procure the necessary slaves and thongs for the summary chastisement of Tranio. In the thirteenth scene the intriguing slave is seen returning, conscious that his hour is come ; however, he takes counsel with Callidamates—who, meantime, has once more grown sober—as to the best steps to take in view of the impending crisis. In Scene xiii. he takes the bold resolution of accosting Theopropides ; and both of the interlocutors affect a friendly mien towards each other ; each in reality seeking to fathom the plan of his adversary. Tranio affects extreme surprise and indignation at Simo's obstinate denial of his story, and proposes himself to go and arrest him, and bring him to justice. "Not so," says Theopropides, aware of his plan for sneaking off. "I've reflected, and I think I'll examine his slaves by

the torture ; 'twill be better so. I have some people coming. . . .” “Good,” says Tranio, who has no difficulty in guessing that the people in question are in fact no other than the “lorarii,” or executioners, destined to flog himself. “Meantime, I’ll just sit here on the altar.” Every device of Theopropides to keep his slave away from the holy place is in vain, and so Theopropides sees himself again baffled by his crafty slave. He can contain his passion no longer, but pours a torrent of idle invective on the head of Tranio, who has baffled him so successfully. The fifteenth and last scene brings Callidamates upon the scene as the deputy of the whole chorus of revellers within. He begs again and again for pardon, offering to pay all the debts which Philolaches has contracted, out of his own purse, and pleads his friend’s youth and inexperience as an excuse for his thoughtlessness. Pardon is harder to obtain

for Tranio, though it is at last granted to him too. He characteristically remarks that he is certain to deserve and get another thrashing on the following day, so he may as well have both together.





THE HAUNTED HOUSE.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TRANIO, } *Philolaches' slaves.*
GRUMIO, }

PHILOLACHES, *Theopropides' son.*

PHILEMATIUM, *a freed slave, mistress of Philolaches.*

SCAPHA, *her maid.*

CALLIDAMATES, *a young man, Philolaches' friend.*

DELPHIUM, *his mistress.*

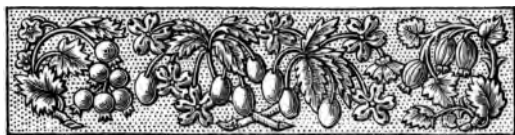
THEOPROPIDES, *an old and wealthy merchant.*

MIRARGURIDES, *a money lender.*

SIMO, *an old man.*

PHANISCUS, *a slave.*

Slaves of different descriptions.



THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

GRUMIO. TRANIO.

Grumio.



UT, rascal, from my kitchen—out, I say !
I will not bear to hear thee talk that way.
Amongst my very dishes wilt thou sit
And nag at me, and deem thy prattling wit ?

Out, rascal, spendthrift, spoiler of my master !

If we were in the country,¹ thou'dst go faster !

Tra. You villain ! in the street this horrid noise !
You seem to like the country and its joys !

¹ One of the punishments inflicted upon the Roman slaves was his transference from the *Familia Urbana*, or town gang, to the *Familia Rustica*, in which he was allowed less freedom, enjoyed fewer luxuries, and had more severe labours to perform.

Then to the country ! Yonder lies the way !
But take this little something with you, pray !

[*Strikes him.*]

Gru. Confound you ; hands off !

Tra. All the fault's with you !

Gru. I'll bear it now, but this tall talk you'll rue ;
You backbite master now ; he'll soon be home.

Tra. How can I bite his back until he come ?

Gru. So you—the people's pet, the town-bred swell,
Talk of the country ! true, you know it well,
You needs must talk of chaff ; for soon you'll find
That you will have our master's corn to grind.
Now drink all day and night, and take your pleasure ;
Corrupt your master's son while you have leisure ;—
Play the true Greek : feed parasites at will,
So you'll our master's dearest wish fulfil :—
For what can please an anxious father more
Than when his son grows sharper than before ?
Thus, for our master now, when home returning,
What joy to find his son advanced in learning !
Our master's son, whom all the country once
Held for so simple, almost for a dunce,
Is now so sharp become, that I'm afraid
He'll bear the prize for sharpness off instead.
You've tutor'd him, and who shall say in vain ?

Tra. My business is my own, I tell you plain.

You love the country—go, and tend your kine,
They are *your* pleasure, leave me then to *mine*;
'Mid love and wine, and mirth and pleasant lasses,
Right pleasantly to me my leisure passes.
My back's my own.

Gru. Ay, stripes have made it tough.

Tra. The gods confound thee, man, we've had
enough!

You pure quintessence of all garlic smell,
You dog, you clown, you goat, you pigsty—

Gru. Well,

You smell of Syrian odours; you recline
On my lord's couch and sup on dainties fine;
I envy not your perfumes nor your dishes,
Your boasted turtle-doves, your game, your fishes;
Leave me to garlic and to humbler life;
I smell of garlic; but I seek not strife.
I bear my fortune, and I tell you true
Fortune will smile on me, and frown on you!

Tra. You're envious now, my friend, I see it all!
My life of comfort acts on you like gall.
I'm made to love; you're made to tend your swine:
Fate made a low lot yours, and high-life mine.

Gru. You gallows-bird, your master wont be long;
How I shall laugh to hear you change your song—
How I shall laugh to see you on the tree!

Tra. P'raps I shall laugh at you, not you at me.

Gru. I ne'er deserved the fate ; 'tis yours by right.

Tra. Silence, or else you'll find that right is might !

Gru. Collect the fodder for your famish'd kine.

You stand—you won't ! good, then I won't repine.

Eat, play the glutton, make yourself at home ;

But know the hour of Fate will surely come.

Tra. Go to the country, to Piræus I,

To buy fresh fish for supper forth must hie.

Don't scowl at me, you jail-bird ; for your vetches—

I'll see that someone home your fodder fetches.

Gru. Jail-bird yourself, or will be by to-morrow !

Tra. The latter word dispenses this day's sorrow.

Gru. Ay, but you know that, much as you may pray
Good fortune halts, ill fortune comes to-day.

Tra. Now peace, and hurry to thy rustic cattle ;
Waste not my time again with this vain prattle.

[*Exit Tra.*

Gru. The rascal's off, and cares for me not *that* !
Nor *I* for *him*, as I can tell him flat.

Ye gods, ye know how well the hope I've cherish'd

My master may come back, ere all have perish'd—

His house, his farm, his money, his estate :

Little is left, and three long years I wait.

Now I'll be off, for here I see the lad ;

But late so good, now, thanks to him, so bad. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Philolaches solus.

LONG have I thought, and ponder'd it well,
If haply I to my heart might tell
To what of all the things on earth
A man is like, most like at his birth ;
I've hit on it now, and I'll tell you my guess
And you, when you've heard it, will say no less :
A man is like to a house built new,
Is it not so, my friends? I appeal to you.

[To audience.

When a house is built, and polish'd so fine,
Made in ship-shape order, with rule and with line,
Then all men praise what the builder has done,
And they say they would like such a house of their own.
But a worthless master, who nothing saves,
Enters the house with his lazy slaves,
And he sits down in helpless inaction.
The storm comes down, and the pitiless hail,
And roof and tiling yield to the gale,
And the master, he cares not a fraction.

The great big raindrops ruthless fall
And mar the beauty of each wall,

The moisten'd beams fall to decay,
The workman's touches fade away,
The house is ruin'd, late so fair,
You scarce can spy one beauty there.
But let none blame the workman's skill,
The tenant 'twas who caused the ill.
And many men, if but they would,
Might nip an evil in the bud :
If in a roof a hole they spy
They say they'll mend it by-and-by.
They wait for days, they wait for years,
The house comes down about their ears.
These my ideas on houses—then
I'll pass, and tell you those on men.
The father's the workman who builds up his son,
He lays the foundation, the work is begun.
He raises him slowly, he trains him long,
That his son may prove useful, and handsome and
 strong,
And he reckons the money he spends as dross,
For he knows that greater would be the loss
Should he train up a lad at whom folk might sneer,
Nor envy the father the son he should rear.

The son adopts the man's career,
Under some kind relation's eye,

The workman leaves him with a sigh,
He serves his first campaign a year.

And then, and not till then, is seen
How firmly was his structure laid,
Alas ! how often have I said
Oh had my childhood longer been !

I ne'er knew wrong until the day
I parted from the workman's hand,
Now, finish'd, all alone I stand ;
The workman's careful touch away.

The storm that wreck'd me was foul sloth ;
It beat upon me in its might ;
I helpless stand, ah ! heedless quite
Of sense of shame and virtue both.

T'was not too late to see my fault,
My edifice I still might roof ;—
O would that I had made me proof,
Oh ! Demon Love, 'gainst thy assault.

Love stole like rain into my heart,
Love made my firm resolve decay,
Love chased my fair renown away,
And bade me from my fortune part.

And now behold my mouldering beams !
 I ne'er may mend my house again,
 'Tis down before the driving rain,
 And none may rear it up meseems.

My heart is sore, and sick with grief,
 What was I once, how great my fall !
 But late in manly sports of all—
 Of all my comrades own'd the chief.

SCENE III.

*Enter PHILEMATIUM and SCAPHA, carrying a mirror,
 trinket boxes, etc.*

Philematium.



H my Scapha, all these years long past I never
 with such care
 Bathed myself, and made my toilette, that I ne'er might
 seem more fair.

Sca. Yes, your charms become you, lady, as the
 harvest crowns the year.

Phile. What the harvest has to do with charms I
 own is not quite clear.

Sca. Just what harvests have with washing.

Enter PHILOLACHES unseen.

Philo. (unseen). Lovely Venus, in this hour
Wilt thou on thy hapless worshipper thy cruel storms
down pour ?

As roofless temple feels the rain which mars its beau-
teous form,

Thy Cupid falls on my poor heart, unroof'd to every
storm ;

And I feel that thou hast conquer'd, thou hast con-
quer'd, cruel queen ;

All thy storms have pierced my temple ;—O for what
I might have been !

Phile. Prythee look at me, my Scapha, does my dress
become me well ?

My dear Philolaches to please, I fain would be a belle.

Sca. Dost thou talk of toilettes, lady ? Think not
lovers look to find

Charms in outward beauty only, rather look they to
the mind.

Philo. (unseen). Now, by my faith, yon Scapha all
her sex in wit surpasses

She knows how lovers talk when they would woo and
win the lasses.

Phile. Well, now ?

Sca. Well, now.

Phile. Tell me truly, am I looking thus
my best?

Sca. Thou wouldst be the queen of beauty, lady,
still, though humbly dress'd.

Philo. (unseen). Now, Scapha, for that word of
thine well gifted thou shalt be,

For whoso loves my darling girl, deserveth love of me.

Phile. Do not flatter.

Sca. Thou art foolish. If thou needs
must be ashamed,

Let it be for praise undue, and not for being falsely
blamed.

For myself, I tell thee plainly, I would rather fulsome
praise

Than that man should blame me justly, or at me a
just laugh raise.

Phile. Well, for me, I love a true man; I could
never bear a lie.

Sca. As I love thee, as *he* loves thee, if I flatter, may
I die!

Philo. (unseen). As *he* loves thee, said the vixen!
Spake not of *her* love for *me*!

'Tis *far* too bad; the girl shall have no present, that
I'll see.

Sca. With all thy wit, and all thy sense, I wonder at
thee still.

Phile. Now speak out, and nothing fearing, tell me,
girl, if I do ill?

Sca. 'Tis on Philolaches alone that thou dost pin
thy fate.

His each movement thou art watching ; I have mark'd
thy anxious state.

Fie! thou scornest all thy lovers ; they will answer
thee with scorn ;

Thou wilt rue thy maiden airs, and pine a maiden all
forlorn.

Philo. (unseen). Ye gods, what cursed jade is this
that stands and holds such talk?

I will be her death, the vixen ; shall she thus my dear
hopes balk ?

Now may all the gods I worship hold their worshipper
accurst,

But I'll make her suffer every pang of hunger, cold,
and thirst !

Phile. Hush, Scapha !—talk not treason thus against
my friend and lord.

Sca. Thou art raving. Think'st a lover ever yet has
kept his word ?

Nay, I tell thee he will weary. Men love ever what
is new.

Phile. Never dream it.

Sca. Hopes, alas ! are visions, but their
fruits are few.

But, dear lady, if thou dreamest I am telling aught save
truth,

Think of what I am, and what I was, and say if I speak
sooth.

*I was loved, as thou art lovéd, and I loved but one alone ;
But my lover, like all lovers, wearied soon of loving one.
Soon as age my locks had silver'd, straight he turn'd
his back on me :*

Canst thou hope that chance may order matters other-
wise with thee?

Philo. (unseen). I am itching to be at her, and to
tear the vixen's eyes!

Phile. He has ransom'd me ; he loves me. Should
I then his love despise?

Philo. (unseen). I am happy, I am happy, that my
fortune I have lost.

I have lost it all to please her, but the game is worth
the cost.

Sca. Thou deem'st in *him* thou hast thine all ; in
him thou hopest still ;

Thou wilt love him as he loves thee, both in times of
good and ill.

Love him then, and like a matron, wear for him the
matron's crown.¹

¹ *i. e.* wear your hair plaited in the six plaits which appear to
have been the head-dress of an honourable woman at Rome.

Phile. Well, I deem each woman's fortune stands or falls by her renown.

If I keep but my fair fame, I keep a woman's richest pearl.

Philo. (unseen). Now, as long as I've a farthing left, I'll share it with my girl.

If 'twould save my love from beggary, my father I would sell.

Sca. Yes, but how about those others, all those friends who love thee well?¹

Phile. They will love me all the dearer as they prize the man I love.

Philo. (unseen). O why does not my father die! my faith to her I'd prove;

I would give her all my fortune, I would go and starve myself.

Sca. Your lover and your lover's friends call thrift a lust of pelf;

With them 'tis time to eat and drink from morning until dyne.

You'd say your lover's house was just a sty for feeding swine!

Philo. (unseen). And so 'tis fasting that the hag (confound her nonsense) preaches!

¹ Scapha's answer is intended to be applicable both to Philematium's remark and Philolaches' rejoinder.

I'll see, as far as *she's* concern'd, she'll practise what she teaches.

Phile. Speak of your master if you will, but mark you speak him fair!

Should you speak otherwise, I'll have you beaten then and there.

Philo. (unseen). Now, if to purchase victims I had all that money paid,

'Twere not so well laid out as in the purchase of this maid.

Ye gods, she loves me passing well! in freeing her I gain'd

An advocate to plead my cause whene'er I stand arraign'd.

Sca. I see thou scornest all besides, and lov'st Philolaches.

(Aside.) I won't be whipp'd, and so I'll say he's worth it,—just to please.

Phile. My mirror give me, and my jewels, pray;
My love shall see me at my best this day.

Sca. A woman needs a mirror when her face
Warns her of waxing years and waning grace.

This mirror tells thee, lady, thou'rt divine.

Thine eyes the mirror's brightness far outshine!

Philo. (unseen). For this fair word I'll unsay what I said:—

I'll give a present—to my darling maid!

Phile. Is all arranged? How looks my plaited hair?

Sca. Envy must own the queen of beauty fair.

Philo. (unseen). The woman changes; what can be
her game?

She praises now whom she ne'er ceased to blame.

Phile. Now for the rouge.

Sca. Why rouge?

Phile. To dye my cheeks.

Sca. With ink to whiten ivory she seeks!

Philo. (unseen). Well said about the ivory and the ink!

Phile. Now for the purple paint.

Sca. My lady, think!

A master-piece thou seekest to retouch!

Paint is for faded belles, and only such.

Thou needest, lady, red nor purple dye.

Here is the mirror.

Philo. (unseen). Ah! unhappy I.

She kiss'd the mirror: would I had a stone,

I'd smash my rival then, and reign alone!

Sca. Now wash thy hands, and wipe them clean.

Phile. Why so?

Sca. The mirror smells of silver; and I know
That thou would'st be the first to feel a qualm
Should thy lord think strange silver cross'd thy palm.

Philo. (unseen). I never heard a woman better prate,—
That thought about the silver was first-rate!

Phile. Now for the unguents.

Sca. Lady, stay!

Philo. Why so?

Sca. A lady scentless smells aright, you know.
To vamp'd-up beauties leave their unguents faint,
Those toothless hags that ever reek of paint;
'Tis horrid,—when they dance in hottish weather,
You'd say a cook had mix'd four soups together.

Philo. (unseen). This clever woman knows what she's
about!

(To audience.) These clever women do, as you'll find out
My many worthy friends, who'll rue the hour
You married clever widows for their dower!

Phile. My trinkets and my mantle, aren't they fine?

Sca. Maybe they are; but that's no care of mine.

Phile. Who should care then?

Sca. Who but Philolaches?

Lovers alone should care their girls to please:
Lovers buy love with gold, it is confest,
But thine without thy gold loves thee the best.
It's age that purple needs to give it charms,
And golden bracelets on its wither'd arms:
If woman has but youth and beauty too
She needs no showy dress for men to woo.

Philo. (showing himself). I needs must speak. I
pray what do ye here?

Phile. I deck myself to pleasure thee, my dear.

Philo. Thy beauty mocks thy trinkets ; put them up.
And come, my love, we'll off, 'tis time to sup.

Phile. My pleasure, love, is but to seek my lord's.

Philo. I'd pay a fortune down to hear those words.
I'd think I heard them cheap at minæ twenty !

Phile. I wouldn't rob you, dear ;—give ten ; it's plenty.

Philo. Thou hast them *now* ; bethink thee that I gave
Full thirty minæ for thee when a slave !

Phile. Reproach me not !

Philo. Reproach thee ? How should I ?
Nay ! open to reproach myself I lie.

For since I first began to spend my treasure,
I've nothing bought but thee that gives me pleasure.

Phile. To love thee I'm content, nor crave I better.

Philo. Then cry we quits, since we're each other's
debtor.

I love thee,—thou lovest back,—'tis even so :
May those who love aright ne'er sorrow know !
May those who envy love ne'er taste of joy !

Phile. Sit down, my love. Ho, water, napkins, boy !
Next move the table here, and bring the dice ;
The ointment too, if you think ointment nice.

Philo. What need of ointment in thy presence, sweet ?

[*Perceives Callidamates and Delphium.*

But see, what luck our two best friends to meet !
Thrice welcome, comrades ! What a happy pair !
They're just in time with us the spoils to share.

SCENE IV. .

Enter CALLIDAMATES, led by DELPHIUM. Slaves follow.

Callidamates (to a slave).



TM going out to sup : see that you come
Betimes to fetch me from the banquet home.

I've left the supper where I had to go,

I found the wine so bad, the guests so slow.

Now I'll away and see Philolaches

Where wine runs free and one can talk at ease.

(To Delphium.) Tell me, my dear, wouldst say that I
seem'd merry ?

Del. (aside). Hem,—if you did it were not new.

(Aloud.) Not *very* !

Cal. Let's have a kissing match !

Del. O kiss away !

Cal. That's very fine, but *you* begin, I pray !

Del. Hold up, you're falling ! Look you ; stand
upright !

Cal. My darling girl, you're dearer than my sight !

Del. The street is not a sofa.

Cal. 'Tis, I say !

I wish to fall, and will.

Del. Then fall away !

Cal. But you'll come too? You won't leave *me*, my own?

Del. O no! I'd never let thee fall alone.

Cal. Some one will pick us up, 'twill all come right!

Del. He's tipsy!

Cal. Tip—tip, tipsy!—O what spite!

Del. Your hand, you'll be run over!

Cal. Come, I say!

Del. Yes, you say *come*; but do you know the way?

Cal. I do. I know I'm going to drink at home.

Del. No, no, 'tis *here*!

Cal. Well, *here* to drink I've come.

Philo. I'll go and meet my friends, and back I'll be
In two short seconds.

Phile. That's an age to me.

Cal. Hold, who goes here?

Philo. 'Tis I.

Cal. Philolaches,

My best of friends!

Philo. My friend, be seated, please.

Whence hail you?

Cal. From a drinking bout divine!

Philo. Be seated, Delphium.

Cal. Give the girl some wine.—

I'm for a snooze.

Del. You smile? He's drunk, you know.

Philo. Then shall I leave him?

Del. Yes, 'tis better so.

Philo. (to Phil.) Well, let's be merry; drink to me,
my soul!

Fill Delphium's cup, and pass the flowing bowl.





ACT II.

SCENE V.

TRANIO. PHILOLACHES. CALLIDAMATES. PHILEMATIUM. DELPHIUM. Slaves.

Tranio.



HE god of heaven, whose will is over all,
Wills that myself and master's son should
fall ;
My hope is gone, my confidence at sea,—
Salvation's self might save all else but me.
My master's in the port arrived : oh, woe !
Oh, what a heap of ills for Tranio !
What gains can e'er recoup thee for thy sorrow !
Think of the tortures thou must bear to-morrow !
Where are those gallows-birds whose total gains
Ne'er pay their masters for their cost in chains,¹
Or those who for three coppers scale a breach
And sell their lives for just ten spearwounds each?²

¹ *i.e.* slaves.

² *i.e.* soldiers.

A talent he shall have and thanks beside
Who'll bear my message,—and get crucified!
Then he may ask me for my money down.—
But woe is me, I must post haste to town!

Philo. The fish is come, here's Tranio from the
coast.

Tra. We both are—

Philo. What?

Tra. We both are—

Philo. Well, now?

Tra. Lost!

Philo. Why so?

Tra. Your father—

Philo. What?

Tra. Your father's here.

Philo. Where is he? Who has seen him?

Tra. 'Tis too clear!

These eyes have seen him!

Philo. Ah! what are you thinking?

What can I do?

Tra. Just now—leave off your drinking!

Philo. You saw him?

Tra. As I say—

Philo. You mean it?

Tra. Ay,

I saw him.

Philo. Then there's only left—to die !

Tra. What could I gain by lying ?

Philo. What's to do ?

Tra. Clear out this room. Who's that there sleeping ? *Who ?*

Philo. It's Callidamates.

Tra. Give him a shake.

Del. Now Callidamates, my dear, do wake !

Cal. Awake ? I never slept.—Let's have some drink !

Del. Philolaches' father home is come ! Oh, think !

Cal. Oh, hang his father !

Philo. Ay, and hang me too !

Cal. Both on one rope ? no, no, 'twould never do.¹

Philo. Get up,—my father's come !

Cal. Your father here !

Let him go back,—he'd better not come near.

Philo. What can I do ? My father's at the door,
Myself am half seas over—if not more.

These empty pots tell tales of copious drink,
“ Wait till you're thirsty ere your well you sink.”
I've waited till my father should be home.

¹ The joke in the original depends upon a verbal quibble impossible to translate literally. The drunken Callidamates misunderstands Philolaches, and this misapprehension I have endeavoured to copy in the translation.

You're thirsty? Sink your well, since home he's come.

Tra. But see this man, he's off to sleep again.

Philo. My father's here !

Cal. I'll be your father's bane.

Give me my shoes and sword, I'll lay him dead !

Philo. (*to slaves*). Out with him ! drag his feet ! I'll hold his head !

Cal. I'm very bad !

Philo. Hark at his drunken brawl !

Tra. Courage, my friends, and I will manage all.

Philo. We're ruin'd !

Tra. Nonsense, I have found a plan ;—
I'll make your father, sure as I'm a man,
Not only not come in but run away.

Now clear the room, and girls, withdraw, I say !

Philo. And I ?

Tra. You stop with her. What would you more ?

Del. And we ?

Tra. Sit quiet just inside the door.

For whether here or there you're sure to drink !

Philo. His words are fine, but I'm afraid to think . . .

Tra. Be quiet as I bid you. Courage,—come !

Now girls, retire ! haste, Philematium !

Del. We'll do your bidding.

Tra. Thank almighty Jove !

My first request is for myself—your love ;

My second—see you firmly lock the door !
And let no sound be heard, or all is o'er—
No one must seem at home, or all struck dumb !

Philo. I'll see to this.

Tra. And now the word is “mum !”
When the old rascal's knocking, mind you see
That no one answers.

Philo. You depend on me.

Tra. Give me the Spartan key, the door to lock !
So—we're safe now. Let the old beggar knock !

Philo. I've confidence in thee, and thou dost know
On thee my hopes are fixed, dear Tranio.

[*Tranio before the house door alone, loquitur.*

A man though he's a coward at heart
May play a most defiant part :
But this the prudent man should see
That what is plann'd defiantly
May turn to issue fair at last,
And not life's dearest pleasures blast.
So when this stormy scene is o'er
Right gallantly I'll make the shore,
And once the surging waves are laid
No word shall be 'gainst Tranio said.
(*Seeing boy.*) But hold, get back ! what means this
noise,
To hear is to obey—for boys.

Enter Boy.

(*Boy.*) My master begs, by some device
You'll keep *him* off, at any price.

Tra. Go back, and tell him not to fear—
His father ne'er shall venture near.

Nay rather he may trust to me
To make the old man turn and flee.—

Give me the key and get inside!
Make fast the door, and quiet bide!
I'll show my lord some curious play;
Few see in life a sport so gay.

Most wait for sports until they're dead,¹
He'll see them in his life instead.

Hold, here he is, I'll step this way.
Gods! may he swallow all I say!

¹ Referring to the Roman custom of celebrating games at the funerals of the rich.

SCENE VI.

Enter THEOPROPIDES followed by Servants.

Theopropides.

THANK thee, Neptune, thou art great and good,
 I'm glad (of course) that I've escaped thy flood.
 But if I ever after this be brave
 To sail one foot's breadth on the ocean wave ;
 Why then I own I should my folly rue,
 And beg thee what thou wouldst have done to do ;
 From this day forth 'tis up between us two !

Tra. (aside). Good Neptune, thou hast err'd, and at
my cost ;

Oh, what a fine occasion hast thou lost !

The. Three years in Egypt past, I homeward come ;
 How glad my folk will be to see me home !

Tra. (aside). They'd show more joy should one come
 in who said,

That he regretted much—that you were dead.

The. But what means this? The door lock'd, and
 by day !

I'll knock. What, no one opens? Quick, I say !

Tra. Who's this—who dares approach our doors?
Stay; ho!

The. Why here's my slave. Not know *me*, Tranio?

Tra. My master, hail! To see you safe what pleasure!

You've kept your health?

The. I have.

Tra. Joy past all measure!

The. Are you all mad?

Tra. Why so?

The. Why, thrice I've knock'd!

You take your walks and leave the housedoor lock'd;
I've almost stoven in the doors with knocking.

Tra. What, so you touch'd the door? How very shocking!

The. I tell you, man, I nearly knock'd it in.

Tra. You *touch'd* it?

The. Yes. What then?

Tra. Oh, what a sin!

The. What means this noise? Explain!

Tra. I tell you flat

It's desecration, nothing less than that!

The. How now?

Tra. How now? run from the house and flee!

You're safer, p'rhaps, if you keep near to me.

But did you *touch* the door?

The. I knock'd, it's clear.

Tra. Well, then you kill'd—

The. Whom?

Tra. All you hold most dear.

The. Now may the gods immortal make thee rue—

Tra. They'll visit *thee* if they give judgment true.

The. Now, why? Speak out! I bid you speak the worst.

Tra. Dear master, bid your slaves move farther first.

The. Move farther, slaves!

Tra. Touch not the house, but bow
And touch the earth.

The. Do pray let's enter now.

Tra. Nay, all these seven months since we withdrew
The house stands empty, and with reason too.

The. Why so? Explain.

Tra. We may be overheard!
See that no mortal's by to catch a word.

The. 'Tis safe.

Tra. Look once again. There's no one near?

The. There's no one by, I say, to overhear.

Tra. A hideous crime—

The. Speak on! You see I wait.

Tra. A hideous crime, I say, of ancient date,
Of ancient date, and just found out in time—

The. Who was the murderer, and what the crime?

Tra. A host by treachery had slain his guest ;
He sold the house to you, and ne'er confess'd !

The. He slew him ?

Tra. Ay ; and stole his gold, that's more !
And buried here his victim 'neath this floor.

The. What made you first suspect this horrid deed ?

Tra. Your son was dining out, and, as agreed,
At his return we turn'd in for the night ;
I was unmindful to put out the light :
I heard him shriek,—oh, horror !

The. Heard *whom* shriek—
My son ?

Tra. Don't interrupt me, let me speak.
E'en as he slept he saw a form, he says,
A pallid corpse stood straight before his gaze.

The. As he *slept*, say you ?

Tra. Yes ; but silence keep.
The ghost then spake.

The. You're *sure* 'twas in his sleep ?

Tra. Now tell me, pray, for common sense's sake,
Would a ghost parley with a man awake ?
The man was murder'd sixty years ago.
You talk sad trash, my master, you must know !

The. I'm silent.

Tra. Hark now, what the ghost confess'd !
“ I am from o'er the sea, a murder'd guest,

This is my home, here am I bid to dwell ;
Orcus won't have me in the house of hell
Because my death, he says, was premature !
My host betray'd me ; bade me feel secure,
Then murder'd me, the villain, for my gold,
And gave me there a tomb, as I have told."
Then flee,—who bide here all may fear the worst,
This house is haunted and its halls accurst ;
The crowds of horrid ghosts that wander here
I could not reckon, no, not in a year.—
But, hush !

The. What now,—good heavens !

Tra. I heard the door.—

Could it be *he* ?

The. I tremble more and more ;
The dead are come to summon me below,
My blood runs chill,—I feel that I must go.

Tra. (*Hears noise of revellers inside the house—aside.*)
They'll spoil my pretty story, all is lost,
He'll find it out—the old man—to my cost.

The. (*aside.*) He's talking there.

Tra. Quick, from the door away !

The. Why should I fly when thou dost dare to stay ?

Tra. I have no fears whatever on this head,
I have an understanding with the dead.

Voice from within. Ho, Tranio !

Tra. (*Aside.*) Call, if you are wise, no more.
(*Aloud.*) I've done no wrong; 'twas not I smote the door.

The. You spoke aside, myself your mutterings heard.

Tra. (*to both Theop. and the Voice within*) In heav'n's
name, peace! How dare you speak a word?

The. Tell me what moved thee to this idle chatter?

Tra. Didst *thou* then call me? That explains the
matter.

Now, as I live, I thought the murder'd guest
Was scolding me for breaking on his rest.

But dare you stand and heed not what I say?

The. What would you?

Tra. Hide your head and flee away.

The. We'll flee together.

Tra. Nay, *I* need not flee;

I know the dead, and they're at peace with me,

The. You said so. Why then did you fear so sore?

Tra. I'll mind myself; thyself concerns thee more.

Then, prythee, flee as fast as mortal may,

And as thou fliest unto Herc'les pray.

The. (*turning to run*) I call on thee to save me,
Hercules!

Tra. I call upon thee, too; afflict him, please,
Immortal gods, with all the ills ye may.
Oh, Heav'n, what a mess I've cook'd to-day!

SCENE VII.

*Enter Usurer from the Piræus. He does not remark
TRANIO at first; nor does TRANIO, in his anxiety
to keep his eyes upon THEOPROPIDES remark him.
This scene is very imperfect in the original.*

Usurer.



OR lending money, this year's worse than ever!
Money's too cheap, and folk are over clever:

I seek the forum early, stay till night;
But doing business seems hopeless, quite.

Tra. Now I am like to perish even faster!
The Usurer's here who used to serve my master.
'Tis thanks to him my master cut a dash;
He owes to him his mistress and his cash.
'Tis clear, unless I hit upon some plan,
All will come out:—I'll go and beard the man.
But here's my master coming home again;
He must have heard the truth—'tis all too plain!
I'll go and call him, trembling as I call:
Ay, "conscience *does* make cowards of us all."
'Tis conscience which is smiting me to-day;
But I must throw confusion in his way
If I would see my own from danger free.

A fig for conscience!

[*To Theopropides, who is returning in company with the Usurer.*

Sir, whence come you?

The.

See!

A lucky chance has happen'd all unsought,

I've met the man from whom my house I bought.

Tra. I hope you said no word of what I spake?

The. I told him all.

Tra. (aside). Then I my will may make—

Then all my plans are broken; hope is dead.

The. What, muttering still?

Tra. 'Tis nothing. Sir, you said
You told him everything; now is this so?

The. I told him everything he wish'd to know.

Tra. Did he confess the story?

The. He confess'd

'Twas all a lie about the murder'd guest.

Tra. A lie?

The. A lie, I say.

Tra. Alas! alas! [*Aside.*

Poor Tranio is in a pretty pass.

(*Aloud.*) He won't allow, it seems, the murder, then?

The. I told you *no*: I tell you *no* again.

What next pray think you that we ought to do?

Tra. Appoint an arbiter between us two.

(*Aside.*) A man, of course, who'll credit all I swear;—
You'll win the day that Reynard eats a pear.

Usu. Here comes the slave of young Philolaches;
A pretty pair they are for me to squeeze.

The. (to Tranio). Whither away? *Tra.* No whither.

(*Aside.*) At my birth

The gods frowned on me, and on all the earth
No wight more luckless lives: he'll call me now
Before the old man; here he comes, I vow!
He'll call on me, I fear, before the other:
O Heaven, save me from this endless bother!
I'll make a virtue of necessity,
And speak to him, lest he should speak to me.

Usu. (aside). He comes! Hurrah! I get my money
sure.

Tra. (aside). He chuckles; but his chuckling's pre-
mature.

All hail, all hail, dear Misargurides!

Usu. All hail: about the money?

Tra.

Oh, don't tease.

You see me and attack me; what a pest!

Usu. (aside). He's got no money!

Tra. (aside). Oh, how soon he's guess'd!

Usu. Pray drop this trifling!

Tra.

Tell me what you need?

Usu. To see Philolaches.

Tra. If you'd agreed
Upon a day, you'd ne'er have chosen better.

Usu. Why so?

Tra. Come nearer.

Usu. He's, you know, my debtor.

Tra. I know your voice is good ; you needn't bawl.

Usu. I will until you pay, and pay me all.

Tra. Just to oblige me—

Usu. Well?

Tra. Just go away.

Usu. I go?

Tra. Ay ; pray return about mid-day.

Usu. Shall I then get my interest ? tell me this ?

Tra. I promise you shall not one copper miss.

Usu. Why should I waste my morning on the road !
I'll wait till mid-day near to his abode.

Tra. Nay, nay ; just go ! just to oblige me, go !

Usu. A truce to trifling ; pay me what you owe !

Tra. You'd better go, indeed ; do pray believe me.

Usu. I always *do* believe, and you deceive me.

Tra. You ask for money, and I tell you *nay*.

Do pray begone.

Usu. I'll go whene'er you pay.

Whate'er I say, you answer me, "*begone !*"

Tra. Well, take your principal.

Usu. No, *not* alone.



I claim the interest first.

Tra. The interest first ?

You shame-faced scoundrel, claim it till you burst !

My master owes no debt to such as *you*.

Usu. Owes me no debt !

Tra. He'll pay you not one sou.

Perhaps you'd like to see an honest man

An exil'd debtor made—is this your plan ?

Usu. Give me my cash, and let him go or stay.

Tra. Well, here's the sum in full.

Usu. I tell you *nay*.

I'll have my interest in cash paid down.

Tra. You think there's none but you in all the town
To lend us money !

Usu. Will you, yea or nay,

My interest, in *full* my interest pay ?

Tra. His interest !—an interesting fellow !
I never yet saw beast so strong to bellow.

Usu. Call me a beast, and bawl you ne'er so loud,
I'll have my interest, and I won't be cowed.

Tra. Bawl on, my friend, I s'pose it pleases you.

Usu. My *interest* !

The. (coming up). What interest is due ?

Tra. Ha ! here's his father ; now he'll pay you all—
He'll pay you interest and principal.
Speak to him gently ; in your wrath to-day

Don't fling to-morrow's golden chance away.

His money's ready ; see, you'll get it now !

Usu. I'm ready for my cash ; I don't care how.

The. What 's this ?

Tra. Your pardon, sir.

The. Who is this dun

Who comes to twit you and revile my son ?

What is his debt ?

Tra. Sir, were I in your place,

I 'd throw the filthy lucre in his face !

The. You 'd throw ?

Tra. With silver thongs his face I 'd score—

Usu. My face could bear it : would it might bear
more !—

Tra. His face indeed ! his shameless brazen face !

The money-lender, curst like all his race !

The. I care not for his race, but wish to know

What is this money that he says you owe ?

Tra. A trifle from your son he says is due.

The. How much ?

Tra. Some forty minæ.

The. Is this true ?

And *this* a trifle ?

Tra. You can't call it much.

The. And interest too ? I call not trifles such.

Tra. The minæ claimed are only forty-four,
Interest and all.

Usu. 'Tis true ; I ask no more !

Tra. I 'd like to see you ask one extra sou !
(*To Theo.*) Let's get him off ; pay what he claims as due.

The. I pay ?

Tra. Ay *do*.

The. What *I* ?

Tra. Or list to me,
Promise,—don't pay.—You 've *my* authority.

The. But pray, where *is* this cash ?

Tra. We have it still.

The. You have ! then why not take and pay the bill ?

Tra. Your son has bought a house, sir, with the
money.

The. A *house* you say ?

Tra. A house !

The. It's very funny,
He takes me for his model, as he should,
We're traders both, it's strong within our blood.

Tra. He found your house was haunted, as I said,
So went and bought another house instead.

The. A *house*, you say ?

Tra. A house : and would you know,
What sort of house it is, sir ?

The. Even so.

Tra. It's sure to make his fortune.

The.

Dear, how nice !

But do you chance to know my youngster's price ?

Tra. I think he said he'd offered talents two ;¹

The earnest money shews the rest is due.

He borrows just the needful price, you see.

The. Ye gods ! my son is just the son for me !

Usu. It's nearly midday. Then my waiting's o'er.

Tra. Let's pay the villain off ; he's quite a bore.

The. (to *Usurer*). I'll pay the debt, I am your debtor's father.

Usu. Good, sir ;—to-day ?

The.

No ; say to-morrow rather.

Usu. I'll come again then to be paid to-morrow.

[*Exit Usurer.*

Tra. (aside.) Ye gods, afflict the man with every sorrow !

He's play'd the mischief with my darling plan.

(*Aloud.*) Now, by my faith, of all the race of man,

I know no class whom I'd less rather trust

Than money-lenders, or with claims less just.

The. Where is the house of my Philolaches ?

Tra. (aside.) Now plague upon him !

The.

Tell me, if you please.

¹ About £470 sterling.

Tra. I'll tell you ;—(*reflecting*) how provoking! in effect

The owner's name I fain would recollect.

The. Quick, jog your memory!

Tra. (*aside*). Now, what can I say?—

I'll take the old man just across the way,

And swear yon house is that his son has bought.

O sudden inspiration ; happy thought !—

A lie, like pudding, should be fresh and hot ;

I'm burnt by this before it's left the pot !

I'll serve it up on proof, this cook'd-up lie :

If 'twont go down—I'll change it by-and-by.

The. Well, have you got his name?

Tra. Confound him ! no.

(*Aside*.) Confound himself ! (*Aloud*) But 'tis your neighbour, so

You sure must know him ?

The. 'Tis a legal sale ?

Tra. Ay, if you pay ; if *not*,—'tis no avail.

The. I don't much like the newly purchased site.

Tra. It can't be better.

The. Well, perhaps you're right.

Let's take a look inside : just give a knock,

I'll just go in, and of the house take stock.

Tra. (*aside*). Confound it all ! I thought I'd made a hit,

But twice my fortune on one rock has split.
Dear Hercules, if prayers may aught effect,
Save now my bark which seems too surely wreck'd!
Save me! suggest a lie.

The. Call some one out!

Quick, let me in, I wish to look about.

Tra. The ladies are at home. Like gallant men,
Let's ask if we intrude, and enter then.

The. A good idea; go knock—and say, we fear
Our visit is ill-timed. I wait you here.

Tra. (aside.) Now may heaven curse thee for a sly
old thief!

Who bringest honest fellows' plans to grief—
Here's Simo standing at his own house gate:
Ha! prayers it seems have touch'd relentless fate.
Shall I accost him? No. I'll stand apart,
For some few minutes hidden. In my heart
I'll call a council; think of some pretext;
And trust to Heaven's will for what comes next.

SCENE VIII.

SIMO comes out of his house without remarking TRANIO,
who stands in the background. THEOPROPIDES
comes up a little after.

Simo.

NEVER half so happy feel,
As when I've made a hearty meal.

To-day, of all days in the year
My wife has made me merriest cheer,
And now to bed she bids me go ;
I thought she would ; but I say *no* !
Yon venison ne'er was bought in vain ;
I guess'd she had some point to gain.
She thought, forsooth—the clever soul—
She'd stop my after-dinner stroll—
But I hate sleeping after meals ;
For after sleep one stupid feels ;
So though she scold, and call me sinner,
My stroll I *will* take after dinner—
I've slunk away, and I'll engage,
That she is like to burst with rage.

Tra. (aside). Rejoice, old man, that once you've fed,
For you'll go supperless to bed ;

And, my friend Simo, I suspect you're
In for a pretty curtain lecture.

Simo. I think now as I've often thought
That if a rich old maid you've caught,
And if the main charm is her pelf,
Then, frankly speaking, 'tis a bore,
To make believe you love herself,
And play the gallant evermore.
Now this is just the case with me ;
I wish to be a little free
To see what's doing in the town
Ere to my slumber settling down.

(*To audience.*) I don't know how *you* find your wives,
Whether they charm or vex your lives ;
But I may frankly tell you *mine*
Had ne'er a temper quite divine,—
And what I feel the greatest curse
Is, that in future, she'll be worse !

Tra. (aside). You don't enjoy, my ancient friend,
The quiet hour you thought you'd spend ?
This then is married bliss ! but own
The fault was yours, and yours alone !
Time presses, and I must engage,
To talk with yonder ancient sage :
I think I see my way to lie
Much to my credit, credibly.

(*Approaching Simo.*) Now, Heaven greet you, Simo !

Simo. How d'you do ?

Tra. Your health is good ?

Simo. So, so ; and how fare you ?

Tra. I am in luck : I hold an honest hand.

Simo. You're very friendly.

Tra. Quite at your command.

Simo. I wish the hand I hold were honest too !

Tra. Well, sir, it is.

Simo. No ! Honesty and you
Are strangers : I have heard of all your tricks.

Tra. What mean you ?

Simo. Knave whom conscience never pricks !
I know your doings by the town's report ;
You never seem to think that life is short.

Tra. (aside). What means he with his morals ? O,
I see,
He thinks that with such talk he'll frighten me.

Simo. A pretty life ! I know your dainties fine,
Your love for meats and fish and costly wine.

Tra. Such *was* my life, as I with sorrow own ;
But all is changed ; leave by-gone days alone.

Simo. How say you ?

Tra. We are all near ruin's door !

Simo. Pooh ! we shall prosper, as we have before.

Tra. Yes, we've done pretty well until to-day,

But now the lucky wind has sunk, I say.

Simo. How say you, sunk ?

Tra. How ? To our loss you'll find.

Simo. A ship that's safe in port can scorn the wind.

Tra. O sorrow !

Simo. Why ?

Tra. I say, I've perished !

Simo. Hush.

And why ?

Tra. A ship has come my own to crush.

The. Now, rascal, hither, quick !

Tra. Sir, I'm your slave.

Simo. Tranio, do tell me what you wish to have ?

Tra. I will, sir : master's here beyond my hope—

Simo. The deuce he is ! then you may fear the rope.

Think of the chains ; and then . . .

Tra. O, master dear,

Pray tell no tales of me !

Simo. I won't—ne'er fear.

Tra. How kind, my patron, oh, how very kind !

Simo. To gain such clients truly I've no mind !

Tra. Now let me think what master bade me do.

Simo. Answer me first what I would ask of you.

What said your young lord's father when he heard
Of all your doings,—eh ?

Tra. Why, not a word.

Simo. He scolded, sure, his son ?

Tra.

He's as serene

As is the weather,—when it's clear, I mean.

But now he bade me ask you, of your grace,

You'd kindly let him just inspect your place.

Simo. It's not for sale.

Tra.

I know it ; but I find

The old man's ta'en a fancy in his mind

To build some women's chambers, and a bath,

A portico, and then lay out a path

Simo. A pretty fancy, but what's that to me !

Tra. It's thus : he often says he longs to see

His son well-married ; 'tis his wish in life,

So he will build a chamber for his wife ;

And then he hears from some grand architect,

Your house is built so well in this respect,

He fain would model his new plans on those.

Simo. He might do worse ; but better, if he chose.

Tra. Then it's so cool ; for so I've heard him say,

You sit out in the air the live-long day.

Simo. Nay, the reverse is true : though shade
abound

In every corner else, here Sol is found

From morning until eve : sure never dun

Was so persistent as my friend the sun ;

My well's the only shady corner here,

But e'en that this is cool I wouldn't swear.

Tra. Well, if you have a *well* you can't want *better*.

Simo. Don't bore me, pray ; it's quite true, every letter.

Tra. Still, let him look.

Simo. O, he may look his fill,
And copy, if he pleases, all he will.

Tra. Then, shall I go and call him ?

Simo. Even so.

Tra. (aside). The greatest mortals in the world I know,

Were Alexander and Agathocles :

Now, I'm a greater man than even these :

Their deeds were only mortal : as for mine,

(I am the third) my deeds are quite divine.

I use two ancient sages just as asses,

My skill the art of muleteers surpasses :

They use, to serve their private ends, their mules ;

I put the saddle on two aged fools.

They'd bear one twice as heavy and still go :—

Shall I accost this aged fool, or no ? (*Calls.*)

Ho ! Theopropides !

The. Whom hear I call ?

Tra. Your slave, the only faithful one of all !

You told me, and I've done your whole commission.

The. I said, Make haste. I blame you for omission.

Tra. The old man bade me wait: I daren't refuse.

The. Your *duty* bade you wait: your old excuse!

Tra. A proverb old, my friend, which all men
know,

Says that it's hard at once to suck and blow;

How could I be at once both here and there too?

The. Well, well!

Tra. Inspect the house and all you care to.

The. Go first.

Tra. I lead the way.

The. I come behind.

Tra. Old Simo waits us there; and if you find

The old man sulky, 'tis just in effect

That he repents his bargain—I expect.

The. Repents it? How?

Tra. He begg'd me say he'd fain
Cancel the sale and have his house again,
And begg'd I'd with my master please to plead.

Theo. Each man's his nearest neighbour: 'twas
agreed,

And so I think should rest: 'tis surely true

That had *we* wish'd our bargain to undo

You'd have objected, and talk'd big of right;

A man should keep his interest first in sight,

And think of *self* in foolish Pity's spite.

Tra. You linger!

The. No, 'tis you.

Tra. Well, follow.

The. On!

Tra. Your servant, sir. Yon is the vendor, yon.

(*To Simo.*) The gentleman to see the house, sir, please.

Simo. I'm glad to see you, Theopropides—

To see you back.

The. The gods your worship save.

Simo. You wish'd to see this house, so said your slave.

The. Perhaps you'd rather now I'd stay away?

Simo. No; just walk in.

The. What will the ladies say?

Simo. *That* for the ladies! Walk just where you please,
As if the house were yours, quite at your ease.

The. *As if?*

Tra. You see the old man is down-hearted
To think his dear old house and he have parted:
An old man's fancy; humour it as such!

The. I will.

Tra. Well said; it will not cost you much;
So treat him just as though he own'd it still.
Don't smile; don't press your claims: be calm.

The. I will.
I praise your tact, and own your judgment sound.

Simo. Now pray step in, and as you please walk round.

The. (*to Simo.*) Dear sir, you're very friendly and
polite:

I'm quite ashamed!

Simo. Dear sir, you're welcome quite.

Tra. A finer porch than yon was never made,
As you must own, nor finer promenade.

The. 'Tis fine, indeed.

Tra. Look at the door-posts; do!
How firm and stout they look, and graceful too.

Theo. They're as you say, first-rate.

Simo. They needs should be;
The price was first-rate, too, it seem'd to me.

Tra. That one word, "was," is more than he can bear.

The. What did they cost?

Simo. Three minæ for the pair,
The cartage not included.

The. (aside to Tra.) I declare
They're not so fine as I believed the case;
The wood-worm's gnaw'd them from the very base.

Tra. No; they were fell'd in summer, that's the
reason;

It's always thus with wood fell'd out of season.

A coat of pitch will set that matter right.

The workmanship is good; no barbarous wight

With barbarous porridge stuff'd e'er chisell'd those.

How neat the joinings! what a calm repose!

You'd say they slept—¹

¹ The audience would naturally think of *Tranio's* two dupes.

The. They slept?

Tra. I mean to say,
They close like eyelids, firm and quiet as they.
Well, have you seen enough?

The. The more I look
The more I'm pleased.

Tra. See yonder how one rook¹
Is plucking, turn by turn, yon vulture pair!
Look straight at me ; you'll find the rook is there.
Say, do you see it?

The. I can't say I do.

Tra. Then can you see the vultures nearer you?

The. To cut it short, I see no bird at all.
There are no paintings all along the wall.

Tra. Your sight is failing as your years increase :
So never mind ! Make no excuses, please.

The. From all I *can* see, 'tis the house for me.

Simo. The more you see, the more you'll care to see.

The. Your words are just.

Simo. (to slave.) Ho, boy ! come here and show
These gentlemen the house, for I must go
On business to the forum ; had I leisure
To take them in myself, 'twould give me pleasure.

The. Thanks for your guide, I'd rather go alone.

¹ Tranio points at an imaginary fresco on the wall.

I'll not be "*taken in*" by any one.

Simo. The house, I mean—you'll have a guide for that?

The. I'll have no guide at all, I tell you flat!

Simo. Well, as you please.

The. Well then, alone I'll go.

Simo. You're welcome, sir.

The. And for your guide, sir, *no*.

Tra. Just wait—I think the dog. . . .

The. Yes, see, I pray.

Tra. Pst, dog, be off: be off, you beast, away!

He lingers still! Be off!

Simo. What needless fright!

He's quiet as water; enter, he won't bite.

I must away to business.

The. Thank you, sir;

A pleasant walk. Now, Tranio, for that cur—

I'm not afraid, but still don't like his eye;

I'd rather that he'd choose elsewhere to lie.

Tra. Poor dog, how quiet he lies; pray leave him, do,
Or else you'll seem a coward and nuisance too.

The. Well, as you please; you follow where I go.

Tra. No fear; you'll never miss your Tranio!





ACT III.

SCENE IX.

PHANISCUS, *who is come to fetch CALLIDAMATES.*

Phaniscus.



FAULTLESS slave who fears to sin will
serve his master best ;

For slaves who scorn the thong when once
they've earned it scorn the rest.

They learn the tricks of runaways, are caught, and get
the lash,

And fain count up their thrashings as they cannot count
up cash.

They earn fresh stripes and get them too, in full and
perfect measure ;

This interest will aye be paid, and this will be their
treasure.

Now *I* know what ill fortune is, and shun her while I
may.

I trust my skin may ever be as sound as 'tis to-day.
If I obey my master, then, though lashes rain around,
I stand and chuckle still, to think that still my skin is
sound.

A slave his master makes, they say ; I hold this to be
true :

A slave is good, the master's good : he's bad, his lord
is too.

To think of all the saucy slaves that wait upon my
master !

Their scourgings come upon them fast—their savings
fly still faster.

Say they're bid to go an errand, be the message from
their lord :

" I am busy," you may hear them say ; or else, " I
can't be bor'd."

" Your errand gives you wondrous airs ; you seem quite
in a flurry ;

You're off to gorge, you greedy mule, hence all this
hurry skurry."

I've heard and borne this more than once, and done
the errand too ;

And now my lord alone I seek of all the lazy crew.

To-morrow he will find it out and make the varlets
smart ;

They'll know what good stout oxhide is, and curse the
tanner's art

'Tis well,—if one must suffer, why, be sure I'd rather
see
The tanners work for them, than spinners spin the rope
for me!¹

SCENE X.

*Enter another Attendant of CALLIDAMATES, who
abuses PHANISCUS.*

Attendant.

PHANISCUS! stop, d'ye hear, and look this way;
Do as you're told.

Pha. Don't bother me, I pray.

Atten. What airs he gives himself—the monkey bold!
You dirty parasite, do as you're told!

Pha. A parasite, and why?

Atten. A parasite

Will stick at nought to sate his appetite.

You play the lord yourself, because your lord

¹ A jocular way of saying—I'd rather you got lashed than I; I'd rather you had a taste of the ox-hide than I of the rope; rather you made the acquaintance of the tanner than I that of the rope-maker.

Gives you his favours.

Pha. Bah ! my eyes are bored.

Atten. How bored ?

Pha. This vapouring acts on them like smoke.

Atten. You talk of idle words, a pretty joke !

Whose practice, as 'tis known, has been of old
To strike bad coins and make them pass for gold.

Pha. Abuse away ! I can full well afford
To hold my peace, the favourite of my lord :
So keep your silence do, and come with me.


Atten. I'll come and rattle at the doors, you'll see.
I wonder if this door has any friends !
(*Shouts.*) Is any one inside there who intends
To open it ? I can't but feel disposed
To stave it in if it's kept longer closed.
They will not open ? Let them leave it, then ;
Their knavish deeds bespeak them knavish men.
They might spring out—I'll just be on my guard ;
When rascals strike, they're apt to strike full hard.

[*Withdraws into the corner made by stage and
Theopropides' house.*

SCENE XI.

TRANIO *coming with* THEOPROPIDES *out of*
SIMO'S *House.*

Tranio.

HAT think you of the purchase?

The.

Quite content.

Tra. You do not think the price too high, I meant?

The. Too high? Well, if you ask me, I must say

I really think the house was thrown away.

Tra. In fact, you're pleased.

The.

My bliss has no alloy.

By Hercules, it makes me wild with joy!

Tra. You like the woman's room and portico?

The. I never building saw that struck me so.

The public buildings cannot boast its match.

Tra. I'm sure they can't. We've measured all the
batch,

Philolaches and I.

The.

And found, I pray?

Tra. This portico the longest far away.

The. Ye gods! A charming bargain all must own.

Now do I swear, would some one pay me down

Six silver talents for the bargain off,

I'd keep my house, and at his offer scoff !

Tra. E'en with his offer should you wish to close
I with my veto straight would interpose.

The. A good investment, no one can deny.

Tra. The main adviser, you must own, was I.
I made him borrow cash at interest high,
That he might pay the earnest due to-day.

The. You've saved the bark, accept my thanks, I pray ;
Its eighty minæ that I think are due.

Tra. Just eighty minæ, not another sou.

The. I'll pay him down.

Tra. You pay the sum to me,
And I will hand it on to him.

The. But see
That I lose nothing by you !

Tra. I protest
I could not, would not cheat you, e'en in jest.

The. I *must* have caution from a man like you.

Tra. Since I've been yours, you'll own you've
found me true.

The. Well, yes ; I've watch'd you ; 'tis a master's
part.

Tra. No watching made me true ; but truth of heart.

The. My prudence bade me on you keep an eye ;

Tra. Prudence did right.

The. Now to the country hie,

And tell my son I'm here !

Tra. I give you heed.

The. And bid him come with you, and use all speed.

Tra. Sir, have no fears. (*Aside*) Back to my comrades now,

By the back door I'll slink, and tell them how
I've quieted all suspicions, and, what's more,
Made the old fool move further from the door.

Pha. Strange that the voices of the guests are
mute !

'Tis silence all ! I hear not e'en the flute.

The. (*sees Phaniscus and other Attendant.*) Ho ! what
is this ? what seek these fellows, pray ?
I wish they'd keep their prying selves away.

Atten. I'll go and knock and make them open. Ho !
D'ye hear me ? open, open, Tranio !

The. What's all this pother ?

Atten. Will you open, please ?
We've come to meet our Callidamates.

The. What are you doing, boys, and what's this fuss ?
I will not have my house-door batter'd thus.

[*Attendant answers, but the answer is lost in the original: it however probably contained a taunt against Theopropides.*]

Pha. The truth is this,—for truth will ever out—
My master holds inside a drinking bout.

The. A drinking bout—your master?

Pha. Even so.

The. My boy, a jest may go too far, you know.

Pha. I came to meet him.

The. Whom?

Pha. My lord, I say.

Am I to go on telling you all day?

The. My boy, there's some mistake; you're quite deceived.

Still you look honest, and to be believed.

Pha. Philolaches lives here, or I'm mistaken.

The. He did, but long ago he's this forsaken.

Atten. A lunatic at large!

Pha. I think 'tis true.

(*To The.*) Father! If ever man was wrong, 'tis you.

If he *has* changed, 'tis true, past all gainsay,

It must have been to-day or yesterday.

The. Six months the house has been deserted.

Atten. Tush!

You're dreaming!

The. I?

Atten. Yes, you.

The. You scoundrel! hush!

Let me speak with this boy.

The. There's no one there!

Pha. Indeed there is: I tell-you I can swear
That yesterday, and many a day before,

Six, seven, eight, I know not how much more—
Since first his father sail'd across the seas,
He's sat there drinking—this Philolaches.

The. Explain yourself!

Pha. Well, as you'd have me speak,
He's drunk and play'd the gallant like a Greek,
And to add merriment to his carouse
With hireling minstrel women fill'd the house.

The. *Who* did all this?

Pha. Philolaches; you know.

The. Not *my* Philolaches? O pray say *no*!

Pha. His father bears the same name as your own.

The. (*aside.*) If he speaks truth, alas me! I'm undone.
I'll question him more closely; (*aloud*) do you think
'Twas *here* your lord and this young man would drink?

Pha. I *know* 'twas here.

The. My boy, you're wond'rous dense;
Methinks you've lunch'd away your common sense.

Pha. What *can* you mean?

Theo. I mean—unless I'm wrong—
You found your potions for your wits too strong.

Pha. No; I can trust my wits. I know this spot;
Philolaches lives here, though *you* say not.
His father was one Theopropides,
Who went to traffic somewhere over seas,
His son, Philolaches, as I have said,
A minstrel maiden bought, and freed, and wed.

The. The *same* Philolaches ?

Pha. The very same :

And Philematium the maiden's name.

The. Her price ?

Atten. Was thirty talents.

Pha. Minæ, knave !

Theo. My son—gave thirty minæ—for a slave ?

Pha. He did.

The. And freed her too ?

Pha. He did, I swear.

The. And then, the old man gone, the worthy pair,
Your master and my son, held long carouse ?

Pha. They did.

The. But sure my son has bought a house ?

Pha. He *never* bought it.

The. Well, but *you* must own
He paid the owner forty minæ down ?

Pha. No, no, again.

The. You 've ruin'd me.

Pha. Say, rather,
The young man 'tis who's ruin'd his own father.

The. Too true, alas !

Pha. I would it were *not* true !
Perhaps I see his father's friend in you ?

The. In the young man you see his father's curse !

Pha. The thirty minæ's nothing : what is worse,

He squanders hundreds more on trifles vain.

The. His father's ruin !

Pha.

But his chiefest bane

Is Tranio his slave, who would, with ease,

Squander the savings e'en of Hercules ;¹

The thought of his poor father calls up tears

Even to me ; ah sorrow ! when he hears

Of the wild doings of his reckless lad

His burning grief will well-nigh drive him mad.

The. If what you say is true, what could I gain
By speaking falsely ?

Atten.

Ho ! I say again

Make open quick !

Pha.

It's no good knocking there,

They're off to drink, as I suppose, elsewhere.

The. Let's follow (*to Phaniscus*) ; you can wait, 'tis
not for long.

Pha. Waiting—to *me*—is waiting for the thong.

The. What ? off so soon ?

Pha.

Sweet freedom is for thee

Of a sound back the surest guarantee !


¹ The tenth part of any great and unexpected gain was devoted to Hercules ; whence he was spoken of proverbially as the rich god ; as we might say, "ruin a Croesus." So in Mr. Browning's "Balaustion's Adventure," p. 15, the heroine on receiving "a whole talent from a wealthy Syracusan," leaves it on "Heracles tripod in the fane."

For me—to do my master's will I haste,
Or else I'm sure my master's thong to taste. [Exit.

SCENE XII.

THEOPROPIDES, SIMO.

Theopropides (aside).

 IS words, O woe, I know not what they mean ;
I thought that I in Egypt long had been :
But no ; methinks I err'd. I travell'd o'er
Wild desert wastes to some far distant shore ;
I know not where I am, nor where I've been,
Methinks I have some phantom vision seen ;
I soon shall know : here comes the man unsought
From whom my son the house in question bought.
Whence sir, and whither ?

Simo. From the forum, sir.

The. And pray was any business there astir ?

Simo. Indeed there was.

The. And what ?

Simo. I look'd about,

And saw a corpse for burial carried out.

The. Indeed a novelty !

Simo. As I have said,

The man had ceased to live—in fact, was dead.

The. Confound your nonsense !

Simo. Have you much to do ?
You ever seem to wish for something new !

The. I'm only just come home from o'er the sea.

Simo. I'm supping out, or you should sup with me.¹

The. Thank you, I'd rather not.

Simo. 'Twould give me sorrow
To miss you altogether—so to-morrow
(If no one asks me first) I'll sup with you.

The. Thank you ; I fear I must decline this too ;
But if you're not engaged just now, attend.

Simo. I am all ears ; say on.

The. Well then, my friend,
Some forty minæ you, I think, received
From my Philolaches, or I'm deceived.

Simo. Of not one single copper have I heard.

The. From Tranio then ?

Pha. Still less, upon my word.

The. Not as part payment ?

Simo. You are dreaming, man !

The. 'Tis *you're* the dreamer, if you think you can
Cancel a bargain by ignoring one.

Simo. What bargain ?

The. Why, the bargain with my son ;

¹ It was the Greek custom to invite an acquaintance who had just returned from a journey to supper. Cf. Becker's *Charicles* i. sc. v. note 14, cited by Lorenz.

I heard of it, 'twas while I was away.

Simo. A bargain? and with me?—and on what day?

The. I owe you eighty minæ, as you know.

Simo. I swear you don't;—still—pay me what you owe!

A bargain is a bargain; do not try
To break it off, or what is done deny.

The. I won't deny it, and I'll pay it down:

But that you're wrong about the forty, own.

[*A gap of about four lines in the original.*]

Simo. He said you wish'd to get your son a spouse,
And so were building to enlarge your house.

The. That *I* was building?

Simo. So the rascal said.

The. I cannot speak; I stifle; I am dead!

My neighbour, I am ruin'd.

Simo. Is it so?

Then you must thank your tricksome Tranio.

The. The rascal's trick'd me and my wrath defied;
To-day he has the laughter on his side.

Simo. What say you?

The. Why, it's just as I have said;
Now help me with your heart and with your head.

Simo. I will.

The. Then just step here with me aside,
Lend me a good stout slave and good stout hide.

Simo. Both at your service.

The. Then I'll make you see
The pleasant way that he's bamboozled me !

SCENE XIII.

TRANIO solus, coming from the Town.



HE man who quails when fortune fails is never
worth two raps,

Though what a rap may be I never knew nor shall
perhaps.

My master sent me out of town to summon home his
son,

I slipp'd out by the garden door, to him all unbeknown.
A door is in the postern-gate ; I threw it open wide,
And with my legion sallied forth, the men and girls
beside.

I led them, like a general, from my close beleaguer'd
post,

And summon'd to a counsel all my comrades of the
host.

My comrades beg me act for them : I take them at
their word ;

I saw that in this council I was president and lord :
So I did as many others do, on whom their luck has
frown'd,



That they mayn't alone be hapless, they spread
mischief all around.

[*Here follows a gap in the original.*]


But what is this? I heard a door! it is my lord, of
course :

I'll go and meet him then, and taste the sweets of
his discourse.

SCENE XIV.

THEOPROPIDES *coming out of SIMO's house*; TRANIO;
Slaves, *with thongs.*

Theopropides (to Slaves.)

TAND there within the threshold out of sight :
When call'd, spring out, and draw the hand-
cuffs tight ;

I'll bring him out before the door, thus tied ;
He's fond of jokes ; I'll play some on his hide.

Tra. The game is up : now, Tranio, 'tis for thee
To extricate thyself, if that may be.

The. He's coming ! now I'll use my every wile,
As I would fain my look'd-for prey beguile.
A skilful angler never scares his prey.
I'll use such craft when he shall pass this way :

If he should see the hook at once he'd flinch :
I'll let my line out slowly, inch by inch ;
I'll seem to know of nothing.

Tra. (aside.) I'll be bound
No craftier man than you could e'er be found,—
No, not in Athens. Every one must own
One might as well talk nonsense to a stone.¹
I'll just accost my friend,—I'll call him here.

The. I'm glad to see that now he's drawing near.

Tra. Sir, if you're seeking me, in time I come !

The. What ! is it Tranio ?

Tra. They're coming home,
The party from the country,—and your son,
Philolaches, will be with you anon.

The. In truth 'twere time he came, if it be true
That Simo is a rogue and liar too.

Tra. A liar, how ?

The. He swears he knows you not,
And of your money never took one jot.

Tra. You're joking with me now : it cannot be
That he should swear he never knew of me.

The. It is so.

Tra. 'Tis a joke : he can't deny

¹ *Lapis*, a stone, was a proverbial expression for a blockhead among the Romans.

My friendship—and what's more he ne'er would try.

The. He swears his house was never up for sale.

Tra. And that he took no cash—a pretty tale!

The. That e'er he sold a house the man denies,
And, consequently, never took the price;
And lest I should in doubt remain, he craves
That I should question, on the rack, his slaves.

Tra. He'll *never* suffer it!

The. He will, I say.

Tra. (*wishing to slink away*). I'll go and summons
him to trial.

The. Stay!

I'll try myself—I'm sure that he'll comply.

Tra. Nay, bid him prove his title legally.
Leave him to me. I'll manage all.

The. Nay, nay,
I wish to hear his slaves, and what they say.

Tra. You should have fetch'd them sooner, 'tis
too late;
Meantime, Sir, I will on yon altar wait,
Lest haply they should thither flee, the slaves,
And balk the scrutiny, the crafty knaves.¹

¹ Tranjo here takes his seat on the altar, from which sacred place he may calmly observe the indignation of his baffled master.

The. Rise!

Tra. I refuse.

The. Nay, quit the altar, pray!

Tra. I say I *won't*!

The. Just let me have my way,—
The slaves shall save themselves; for to my mind
'Twill be a shorter way to get them fined,
If I and Simo should appear alone.

Tra. Do as you please: but you will surely own
That witnesses would help abridge the cause:
They're ticklish men, these judges, with their laws.

The. I want to ask your counsel; do pray rise!

Tra. I feel when I am sitting far more wise.
Bethink you, too, men hold for most divine
The counsel given from a holy shrine.

The. Rise, look me in the face; don't trifle so.

Tra. I'm looking.

The. Do you see?

Tra. Indeed I do.
There's no room for a third when we're together;
He'd starve out-right: we're just birds of one feather!

The. Alas!

Tra. What now?

The. Your talk is pretty cool!

Tra. And how?

The. Why so—you've made me quite a fool!

Tra. I've drawn upon your folly ; but still find
I've left a very fair amount behind.

The. You've from my skull drawn forth my very
brains ;

You've lied to me ; and this for all my pains ;—

Lied like a scoundrel : nay, in very sooth

You've never utter'd one sole word of truth.

Yet think not unavenged your shame to flaunt ;

I'll have you smoked out from your holy haunt.¹

Tra. You've roasted me enough, you'll find me
spoil'd

By too much roasting—try me rather boil'd !

The. I'll make you an example.

Tra. Don't say *make* :

Rather a good example from me take.

The. Now tell me, when I sail'd away o'er seas,

In what way did I leave Philolaches ?

Tra. In what way ? Well, the simple truth to
say,

You left him much in the accustom'd way :

He had of feet, of hands, of lips, a pair ;

And then of fingers he'd the common share.

The. My question meant not this, as you must
know.

¹ The only way to get Tranio away from the altar.


Tra. Then to one question you have answers two.
But see ! here comes young Callidamates,
Your son's boon comrade : now speak what you please.

SCENE XV.

*Enter CALLIDAMATES from Town ; THEOPROPIDES ;
TRANIO.*

Callidamates.

I'D slept away my fumes, and felt at ease,
When in there comes my friend Philolaches ;
Tells me his father's come, and all his fix,
And of that rascal Tranio's knavish tricks ;
And adds, he fears to meet his father's eye :
So now, of all his comrades, none but I
Am chosen as a suppliant to beseech
His father's pardon, and repair the breach.
Here *is* his father, as good luck commands.
(*Addressing Theo.*) Hail, sir, I'm glad you're back from
foreign lands.
I hope you're well. You'll sup with me to-day ?
You *must* ; it's settled. Don't refuse me, pray.
The. May heaven bless you, Callidamates !
But for your supper,—you'll excuse me, please.



Cal. Nay, come.

Tra. Yes ! promise ; if you fail to go
You'll find a substitute in Tranio.

The. Jailbird ! *you* mocking !

Tra. Mocking ? No ; 'twere best,
As there's a supper, there should be a guest.

The. You'll pass *your* evening on the cross, you knave.

Cal. (to Theopropides). Do come to supper ; never
mind your slave.

Tra. Come, don't be modest !

Cal. (to Tranio). Hold, you idiot, do !
What took you to that altar ? tell me true.

Tra. He came and threaten'd me. (*To Theopropides.*)
Now just speak out ;
Here is a judge ; say what it's all about.

The. I say that you to ruin brought my son.

Tra. (to Callidamates). Now listen, and I'll tell you
how 'twas done.

I own he drank a little more than need ;
I own that he his fav'rite mistress freed ;
He borrow'd money, and he spent the same ;
But this no noble youth need own with shame.

The. I see with you I must be on my guard ;
'Gainst such a practised counsel 'twill go hard.

Cal. I'll be the judge ; you, Tranio, as is meet,
Rise to your judge, and let him take his seat.

Tra. (*rises from altar suspiciously, but sits down again*). By all means : be the judge : but mind you see That this fine plan from trickery is free.

Loose me from fears ; restore my master's grace ;
And, if you can, suppose you're in my place.

The. (*to Callidamates*). As for his villany, I let that pass ;

But for the way he's made me look an ass . . .

Tra. To greet those words of wisdom I make bold ;
Wisdom's a crown of glory to the old.

The. What should I do if haply Demipho,
Or some old friend like him, should get to know . . .

Tra. Say you were made a fool, and tell the way ;
'Twould be a first-rate plot for any play !

Cal. Now silence both, and let me speak to both ;
Give ear the while.

The. I'll listen, nothing loath.

Cal. I'm your son's closest friend ; I tell you this,
Lest my intrusion you should take amiss.

He came to me, and said he hardly dare
(His conscience told him) in your sight appear.

He knows that you know all ; oh, pardon then
His folly and his youth ; we are but men,

And he's your son ; and at an early age
Young men in vain pursuits too oft engage.

Whate'er he did, I help'd to do the same ;

My fault is equal ; equal be my blame.
Then all the cash that he in usury paid,
The interest, and the purchase of the maid,
I'll pay it all ; I swear I'll find a way,
And you sha'n't have a single *as* to pay.

The. I never saw more specious advocate
Than you. I can't be wrath, at any rate ;
And *won't* be. Let him love and drink at ease,
And in my presence humour each caprice ;
And if he's sorry for his vain expense,
So much the better for his common sense.
I'm satisfied.

Cal. He's sorry, sir, I vow.

Tra. You pardon *him* ; what say you to *me* now ?

The. I'll hang *you* up, you essence of all ill.

Tra. Must I, although repentant, suffer still ?

The. I'll be your death, you scoundrel, if I live.

Cal. Nay, for *my* sake, *his* fault as well forgive !

The. I'll grant thee all beside ; but my ambition
Is most to send this rascal to perdition.

Cal. Forgive him, too !

The. Nay, look at him, and say
Forgiveness for the scoundrel still you pray ?

[*Tranio makes scornful grimaces*
at Theopropides.

Cal. Be quiet, *Tranio*.

The. Be quiet, *you*.

I'll lash this wretch till *he* be quiet too.

Tra. 'Twere misspent trouble.

Cal. Listen to my prayer.

The. Don't ask me.

Cal. But I do !

The. I cannot bear

To hear you asking.

Cal. Now *you* beg in vain ;

For *my* sake let him off, I beg again !

Tra. Why all this fuss about a small concern ?

To-morrow I am sure the lash to earn ;

So then, to spare you trouble, I'd suggest

To take the two together were the best.

Cal. I beg once more !

The. Well, be it ; for your sake

I'll pardon him, and no resistance make.—

Cal. The play is play'd, my friends, I've won my
cause ;

I ask one favour more :—'tis your applause !



